burnt ruins are cleared away, renovated if not improved structures occupying the place commonly within the first year; where, as in the last century, "the burnt house" tottered and exhibited, often for a generation, its calcined ribs and tottering walls.

Formerly, public subscriptions stood in the stead of the present self-confiding and independent policy; and on the continent (in France), it is scarcely twenty years since all the journals of Europe exhibited advertisements claiming eleemosynary relief for the unhoused inhabitants of Salins, totally destroyed by fire.

Modern calculations have much reduced the charge, *so far as the various insurance companies are concerned;* and that reduction has brought the means of safeguard against calamity within the compass of every man, and therefore led it home to the business and bosom of us all. *Government* has not, however, abated one jot of its imperious exaction upon this vital and religious necessity of the community.

The pamphlet we have named is published by Effingham Wilson, and its design is to explain what it makes palpable, viz. that to assert that any policy, howsoever effected with any insurance office, *is indisputable*, is a solecism in language and an impossibility in law. Good faith and truth must be the basis of every contract in a country possessing true and equitable tribunals. The maxim from Lord Coke, selected as a motto, will perhaps sufficiently explain the drift of the writer—"Covin doth suffocate right." Nevertheless, every wise office will regard their policies as "indisputable," excepting where positive fraud is evident, and every wise man will go only to those offices, being good in other respects, where they do so.

STEEPLE OF ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

THE beautiful structure which is this week carefully engraved, and which is so properly an object of pride to the inhabitants of this ancient town, was probably built at about the close of the fourteenth century; but the particulars and exact date of its erection are unknown. This remarkable church is situated on a bold eminence, which rises very finely from the river Tyne, and in all directions forms an important feature of the town. The view, looking from the bottom of a street called the Side, was, within the recollection of the writer, one of the most picturesque scenes to be met with in this country. Much of this effect has been destroyed by the necessary alterations of many of the projecting and varied gabled houses. The old steeple of the church still remains in its original beauty, and promises for centuries to continue an ornament to the "canny" town. A few years ago the steeple was considered to be in great danger, several cracks being noticed, and also it was observed that it was gradually leaning towards the old Norman castle shown in the engraving. By a liberal supply of money from the corporation this danger has been averted. Mr. Dobson, who was employed as the architect, placed an entirely new foundation below the steeple, repaired the cracks, and restored the lantern and other parts which were dangerously decayed.

It would have been well if these pains had been extended to other portions of the church, which during the last 70 or 80 years has been sadly disfigured. The finely carved oak seats, screen, and other interesting matters were removed; square pews were substituted, and an unsightly partition in the "Gothic" cast of the time of George the Third placed so as to divide the nave from the choir. There still, however, remain several fine examples of tracery, &c. in the interior, which would be much enhanced by the removal of the partition to which I have alluded.

The steeple of St. Nicholas Church is said to have suggested the plan of the steeple of St. Dunstan's-in-the-East, and has often been compared with that structure. The church of St. Dunstan is, however, deficient of the light and airy effect, the fulness and purity of form, and tasteful distribution of ornament which distinguish the steeple of the Newcastle church.

The engraving will give a good idea of the construction of the latter building, which consists of four octagonal, embattled, and pinnacle-surmounted turrets, that rise from the four angles of the tower: from these spring, diagonally, four crocketed flying buttresses, which, on approaching a common centre, severally divide, the superior portion sweeping lightly up into a graduated buttress, the inferior one proceeding to that centre, upon which, supported at the angles by four buttresses, rests a second, far diminished, but quadrangular and embattled tower, constituting, in fact, an elegant lantern, the four sides of which are almost wholly furmed by as many open windows, that in their tracery speak this part of the fabric as being of a more modern date than the tower below. From the centre of the lantern rises, at a height of about 200 ft. from the ground, a delicate spire, crocketed, of octagonal form, and itself connected with four graceful pinnacled turrets, that rise from the superior angles of the lantern. Smaller turrets, but not exactly similar in form and decoration to the four large ones of the great tower, rise from a buttress that runs up the centre of each upper face of the latter. Thus does this celebrated steeple present an aggregate, including the spire, of thirteen pinnacles of different sizes, all crocketed and surmounted by vanes. J. B.

A NOTE FROM SPAIN.*

THE Spaniards are too poor to build now, and if they require public buildings in any large towns, they have procured themselves enough and to spare by their late edicts against the convents: thus, at Barcelona, the Custom-house is a suppressed monastery; so, also, the national tobacco manufactory. In other places, a more suitable change is to turn them into hospitals. From the many drawings and works on Spain you are acquainted with, you must know the "Revival," and indeed almost all more modern buildings of Spain, are Grecian, Roman, Modern Roman, or Revival, or what you will—run mad. Every part is over and over loaded with ornament, statues, vases, flowers, fruit, twirls, whirls, twists, knots, scrolls, chains, and all sorts of other "quips and cranks and wanton wiles;" and yet so large in general are the designs, and so very bold the projections of cornices, balconies, window architraves, doors, &c. that they possess not only immense "picturesque," but a certain grandeur. In my love for architecture, I acknowledge myself of the picturesque school, if there is such a one, and am, therefore, not so much horrified at some of these monsters as you might be; and have, after looking at some of these "gorgeous" fabrics, turned to a building by Herera, and thought his finer taste even flat and poor in comparison. The only new building of any kind, except mere common houses, I have seen, is the "Puerta del Mar," or Sea Gate, at Barcelona, which shows the lingering feeling for the "Moorish;" but they have not even copied the Moorish arch correctly, which in its plan is so very beautiful, as at one of the entrances here into the Court of Oranges, though not equal to that of Cordova, leading into the cathedral. Except this and two other entrances in good Pointed style, the exterior of the cathedral is ugly. But the interior! most superb—almost overwhelming. Its ground-plan is curious: being built upon the foundations of the destroyed mosque, it is quadrilateral, nearly square, so that you have a multitude of piers, there being a vast centre aisle and three side aisles the whole length, besides a fourth fitted up as chapels. It is very dark from the smallness of the windows and coloured glass, unless the sun shines, which he generally does at Seville, and his beams pierce through, and enlighten everything, except, to confess, in this room with a northern aspect, where I am *cold*, writing with my feet on a brazier under the table. In speaking of the exterior of the cathedral being, except in the doors, ugly, I sadly forgot the Giralda adjoining, forming its steeple as we should say in England. You know its architecture; but you cannot feel its effect, and its beautiful colour, warming—rather, cooling, for it is reddest at bottom—gradually upwards, and cutting sharp and high in air against the clearest of blue skies. It is far more beautiful than Giotto's Tower at Florence, though one is built of marble and the other of brick, of few varieties of form in the individual brick, but infinite in the arrangement of them. The view from the top is not as fine as from the San Michalete of Valencia.

Seville, streets and houses (and so in most Spanish towns), is greatly spoilt by white-washing, or yellow or pink, or some other unnatural colour washing, even over the churches; and for fear the glare should fade away, the washing is repeated every six months.

W. H. W.

* From a letter read by the Foreign Secretary at the Institute of Architects on Monday.

LIVING LONDON.

LONDON, a capital whose past history is as large a subject as its existing state, is a world in itself, and its records embrace a world's history. The laborious antiquary has delved amongst its registers and tombstones: the light essayist has hurried over its forms "of many-coloured life:" still no very complete work on this vast metropolis has been produced in any particular department. A reason for this may be found in the almost unlimited variety of aspects which London presents. The number of strangers who resort to the metropolis daily is equal to the population of many capital cities: the people who are tributary to this metropolis as the heart of the British empire amount to a sixth of the whole human race: there is scarcely a commercial transaction upon the face of the globe which is not more or less connected with or represented by London. It contains within itself all that is gorgeous in wealth, all that is squalid in poverty, all that is illustrious in knowledge, and all that is debased in ignorance; all that is beautiful in virtue, and all that is revolting in crime. Adequately to chronicle and to describe such a city as London,—every depth and shallow of the accumulated facts of the past, together with the recesses of the present, should be sounded: to analyze the moral and physical condition, or the complicated movements, of the inhabitants of a single street, is a task almost beyond individual powers: take a single family, and fully describe all the circumstances upon which they are dependent for the conduct of their lives; their food, their clothing, their supply of water and fuel, their means of communication, their employment, their education, their health, their social protection, and their obligations to perform certain duties, and it would be found that such a fraction as one family will furnish a subject large enough for the keenest observer to occupy a life in examining.

It may also be observed, that numbers of this population are growing up in habits more or less opposed to security and order: with such a reflection, considering the extent, it is marvellous to see how life and property are protected; for very many of the murders or assaults that occur are produced by sudden outbreaks of drunken or malignant passion, or aberration of intellect; and as to robbery it seldom happens that it is carried out with violence, the system being more by craft, cunning, imposition, or other subterfuge, and where numbers of degraded and indolent creatures prowl about, who prefer the gains of pauperism and imposture to the returns of honest industry. And if such, the philanthropist may exclaim, be the triumphs of civilisation in the midst of materials so rough and unformed, what may not reasonably be expected when education, combined with the influence of morals and religion, are fairly at work; when our prison discipline is improved, and benevolence has done its best to alleviate the miseries which spring from bad passions indulged, the culture of the mind neglected, and evil habits contracted. G. J. R.

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